

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 178003
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:P:TMILLER

APPROVED BY:S/S-O:RACASTRODALE

-----015037 140835Z /15

O 140240Z JUL 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 178003

FOR UNDERSECRETARY NEWSOM

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM SANA DATED JULY 13, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO JIDDA, RIYADH, DHAHRAN,
USCINCEUR, SECDEF WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T SANA 3434

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, YE

SUBJ: FIRST IDEAS OF YEAR PRESIDENT-TO-BE CONCERNING ARMS
PROGRAMS IN YEMEN

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT-TO-BE ALI ABDALLAH SALIH OUTLINES HIS
VIEWS OF U.S. AND SAUDI ROLES IN STRENGTHENING YEMENI DEFENSES.
END SUMMARY.

1. MILITARY ATTACHE RUSZKIEWICZ AND I CALLED ON CHIEF OF
STAFF AND DEPUTY COMMANDER IN CHIEF ALI ABDALLAH SALIH AT OUR
REQUEST ON 12 JULY. MEETING WAS INTENDED TO EXPAND OUR
RELATIONSHIP WITH SALIH AND, HOPEFULLY, GET TO KNOW HIM
BETTER, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF MANY AND GOOD REPORTS
THAT HE IS SHORTLY TO BE NAMED PRESIDENT OF YAR.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 178003

WE WISHED ALSO TO GIVE HIM SOME FURTHER REASONS FOR RE-
ASSURANCE THAT USG AND SAUDIS WERE WORKING TO HELP YEMEN
IN NUMBER OF WAYS.

2. IN OUR FIRST MEETING ON 26 JUNE, DURING TWINAM VISIT,
WE PROMISED SALIH TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE WITH DETAILS ON THE MILITARY PROGRAM. ALTHOUGH

INSTRUCTIONS STILL LIMITED WHAT I COULD SAY TO YARG OFFICIALS AND DETAILS ON US PROPOSALS STILL LACKING, I NEVERTHELESS FELT I COULD MAKE FAIRLY GOOD SHOW OF SUPPORT WITH SALIH AND THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO DO SO BEFORE HE IS SWEEPED INTO CEREMONIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MAELSTROM OF PRESIDENCY.

3. IN CONTRAST TO FIRST MEETING, SALIH WAS VERY MUCH MORE AT EASE WITH FOREIGNERS AND PROJECTED IMAGE OF COMMAND MUCH MORE CONFIDENTLY. HIS INTENSITY CAME THROUGH, HOWEVER, IN THE FIRST QUESTION HE ASKED: "WHAT IS THE UNITED STATES GOING TO DO TO SUPPORT YEMEN IN THE MILITARY FIELD?" I REPLIED BY PULLING SHEAF OF CABLES FROM MY POCKET AND READING EXCERPTS FROM THEM. I SAID THAT CABLES WERE ONLY SUPERFICIAL EVIDENCE OF THE ACTIVITY IN THE U.S. AND SAUDI ARABIA IN PREPARING SOUND PLANS FOR A REINVIGORATED MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WHICH WOULD MAKE AN IMPACT IN BOTH THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF YEMEN. I SAID NOTHING ABOUT SPECIFIC KINDS OF EQUIPMENT, ACCELERATED DELIVERY SCHEDULES, PAY SUBSIDIES AND OTHER DETAILS BUT CONVEYED TO HIM AS FORCEFULLY AS I COULD THE AMERICAN AND SAUDI CONVICTION THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO MOVE QUICKLY TO ENSURE AN ADEQUATE DEFENSE POSTURE AGAINST SOUTH YEMEN.

4. WITHOUT MENTIONING NAMES OF ANY SAUDI LEADER, I TOLD SALIH THAT AMBASSADOR WEST HAD MET WITH TOP OFFICIALS IN THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE IN THE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 178003

KINGDOM AND FOUND, IF ANYTHING, EVEN MORE DETERMINATION THAN ON THE U.S. SIDE TO PROVIDE TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF OUR COMMITMENT TO YAR. I CONCLUDED BY SAYING I EXPECTED US PROPOSALS FOR HELP TO BE REVIEWED WITH SAUDIS WITHIN NEXT TWO WEEKS.

5. SALIH INTERRUPTED ME TO ASK QUESTION HE SAID WAS CRUCIAL TO YEMENI VIEW OF MILITARY MODERNIZATION IN YAR. "WILL US TAKE DIRECT ROLE IN HELPING US OR WILL IT TAKE INDIRECT ROLE THROUGH SAUDIS OR OTHERS?" I TOLD SALIH I THOUGHT WE WOULD DO BOTH BUT THAT IN OUR VIEW IT WAS MISTAKE TO SEPARATE WHAT SAUDI AND US DO, IMPORTANT THING WAS COORDINATION. THIS WAS TRILATERAL PROGRAM AND TO SUCCEED WOULD HAVE TO REMAIN SO.

6. SALIH WASN'T SATISFIED. HE SAID THAT IF IT WAS TRILATERAL, ANY MEETING SHOULD HAVE YEMENI REPRESENTATIVES AS WELL AS US AND SAUDI REPRESENTATIVES. MOREOVER, HE FELT THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS NEW AND GENERAL AGREEMENT ON PROCEDURES AND SUBSTANCE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. HE SAID HE NEEDED "EVERYTHING -- TANKS, PLANES, ROCKETS, ARTILLERY." I SAID EXISTING PROGRAM WAS A GOOD ONE AND ASKED IF HE WERE ACQUAINTED WITH ALL THE DETAILS OF CONTRACT SIGNED BY HAMDY OVER TWO YEARS

AGO. SALIH WAS A BIT TAKEN BACK AND I WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT THOSE CONTRACTS PROVIDED FOR EVERYTHING THAT WAS NEEDED BY SIX BRIGADES OF YEMENI FORCES. "WHERE ARE THE AMERICAN TANKS?" ASKED SALIH. I REPLIED ARMORED EQUIPMENT, BOTH ARMORED PERSONNEL AND ARMORED CARS WERE TO COME FROM FRENCH NOT THE US UNDER THE ORIGINAL PLAN. I SAID THIS WAS A GOOD PLAN AS IT WOULD ALLOW YEMENIS TO DRAW ON EXISTING FACILITIES FOR MAINTENANCE IN SAUDI ARABIA. SALIH LAMENTED THAT "NO US EQUIPMENT" WAS ON HAND ALTHOUGH AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED OVER TWO YEARS AGO. I POINTED OUT THAT EQUIPMENT WAS ONLY AS GOOD AS TRAINING AND DISCIPLINE OF UNITS THAT RECEIVED IT. GOOD START IN ANY YAR MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM WOULD BE TO MAKE USE OF TWO BATTALIONS OF ARTILLERY THAT HAD BEEN IN COUNTRY FOR MONTHS AND MONTHS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 178003

ALONG WITH HUNDREDS OF VEHICLES.

7. SALIH WAS NOT IN THE LEAST SATISFIED AND RETURNED TO THE QUESTION OF A DIRECT US ROLE. I SAID THE US WOULD CERTAINLY BE REPRESENTED THROUGH TRAINING TEAMS BUT WE SAW IT MATTER OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE FOR YEMENIS AND SAUDIS TO ESTABLISH PRIMARY RELATIONSHIP. SALIH ASKED IF THAT MEANT WE WOULD STAND BEHIND YEMEN AND THEIR SAUDI BROTHERS IF SOUTH ATTACKED. I REPLIED THAT I HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS POINT BUT DEFENSE OF YEMEN LIKE DEFENSE OF OTHER PENINSULAR STATES WAS CLEARLY RECOGNIZED BY ALL DECISION-MAKING LEVELS IN US TODAY AS VERY IMPORTANT. I CITED STATEMENT OF PRESIDENT CARTER TO PRESIDENT AL-ARASHI RE AMERICAN CONCERN FOR "YEMENI SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT."

8. SALIH SAID HE WANTED ME TO GET ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER US PREPARED TO TAKE DIRECT ROLE TO SIGN ANY AGREEMENTS WITH YEMEN, DEAL DIRECTLY WITH YEMEN AND BACK THEM UP IN CASE OF DIFFICULTY. HE SAID HIS GOAL HAD TO BE IN ANY MILITARY MODERNIZATION PROGRAM A MODERN YEMENI ARMY WHICH WAS EQUIVALENT RPT EQUIVALENT OF SOUTH YEMENIS. HE SAID, "YOU KNOW HOW MANY TANKS AND PLANES THEY HAVE. YOU GAVE ME THE INFORMATION YOURSELF BUT THAT IS NOT THE THREAT WE FACE. WE FACE CUBAN, ETHIOPIAN AND OTHER FORCES. WILL YOU HELP US IN CASE OF ATTACK?"

9. AT THIS POINT, TO MOVE THE CONVERSATION FROM THE ABSTRACT TO THE CONCRETE AND FROM THE ALARMING TO THE REASSURING, COL. RUSZKIEWICZ PRESENTED SALIH WITH THE LIST OF QUESTIONS WHICH USMTM HAD ASKED US TO PUT TO THE YAR AS A PRELIMINARY TO PREPARING A LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE FOR AN F-5 PROGRAM AS THE SAUDIS HAVE REQUESTED. AS WE WENT THROUGH THE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 178003

QUESTIONS INQUIRING ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF PILOTS AND THEIR ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH AND THEIR AVAILABILITY FOR TRAINING, SALIH SAW CLEARLY THAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN IN A PROGRAM DEAR TO HIS HEART. I THEN SAID THAT THIS KIND OF DETAIL WAS NECESSARY TO PREPARE A PROGRAM WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY HAVE TO PROCEED THROUGH A NUMBER OF STAGES, EACH FOCUSED ON PARTICULAR AREAS LIKE THE AIR FORCE, ARTILLERY, ANTI-AIR DEFENSE AND ANTI-TANK DEFENSE. I SAID KEY WAS TRAINING AND WE LOOK TO HIM FOR HELP IN NOMINATING GOOD OFFICERS FOR TRAINING IN THE USA. I SAID I WOULD BE MAKING MORE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED THAT COL. RUSZKIEWICZ SEE AIR FORCE COMMANDER DAYFALLAH RE INFORMATION REQUESTED ON F-5 LOA. SALIH SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE, SALIH, WOULD PROVIDE US WITH INFORMATION.

10. TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT TO ANOTHER MATTER WHERE WE COULD BE FORTHCOMING IN THE AREA OF CONCERN TO HIM, I NOTED THAT DIA HAD OBTAINED AN EXCEPTION TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO HIM ON FORCES IN SOUTH YEMEN. I SAID I DID NOT THINK WE WOULD HAVE MUCH MORE INFORMATION THAN I HAD ALREADY PROVIDED BUT HE COULD TAKE SATISFACTION IN KNOWING WE WOULD GIVE HIM WHATEVER WE HAD IN THIS AREA. SALIH WAS GRATIFIED BUT PARADOXICALLY, IN VIEW OF HIS GREAT INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT IN OUR FIRST MEETING ON 26 JUNE, HE SEEMED RELATIVELY DISINTERESTED NOW. HE SAID HE HAD EVERYTHING HE NEEDED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SOUTH YEMENI ARMY FROM THE DEFECTORS WHO HAD COME ACROSS THE BORDER BUT HE WELCOMED ANY INFORMATION WE COULD SUBSEQUENTLY PROVIDE HIM AS A CHECK ON HIS OWN FIGURES. HE SAID US FIGURES TO DATE HAD PROVEN VERY ACCURATE AND HE WAS PLEASED. HE THEN DIRECTED HIS STAFF AIDE TO PRODUCE THE FOLDER ON INTELLIGENCE ON SOUTH YEMEN FORCES (SEPTTEL).

11. COMMENT: SALIH'S CONCERN FOR A CONSPICUOUS AND DIRECT US ROLE IN MILITARY MODERNIZATION IS UNDERSTANDABLE AND, IN LIGHT OF SAUDI ADMINISTRATIVE SHORTCOMINGS TO DATE, PROBABLY INEVITABLE IF WE WANT PROGRAM TO WORK IN EVEN THE MOST

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 178003

LIMITED FASHION. HOWEVER, HIS IDEAS ON WHAT YEMEN NEEDS ARE CLEARLY NOT RPT NOT WELL DEFINED AND FAR BEYOND THE ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY OF THIS GOVERNMENT. TO PROVIDE THE YAR WITH THE EQUIVALENT OF THE 11 BRIGADES AND OVER 100 ATTACK AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE DEPLOYED IN THE SOUTH IS, IN MY VIEW, UNWORKABLE. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, ESTABLISHED GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH SALIH, ONE IN WHICH YEMENI NEEDS AND FOREIGN

RESPONSES CAN BE SHAPED TO SIZE AND FITTED TOGETHER.
DEPARTMENT SHOULD NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT BEYOND QUESTION OF HARD-
WARE, SALIH IS ASKING FOR POLITICAL COMMITMENT IN THE CON-
SPICUOUS FORM OF NEW AGREEMENTS AND A SIZABLE USG PRESENCE IN
THE YAR. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THESE QUESTIONS WERE LINKED
IN HIS MIND TO THE YEMENI ABILITY TO DISPOSE OF SOVIETS HERE
(SEE SEPTTEL) AS WELL AS TO DETER THEM AND THEIR CLIENTS IN
SOUTH YEMEN. FINALLY, TO JUDGE BY DISINTEREST IN OB INFORMA-
TION, YAR THINKING HAS CRYSTALLIZED AROUND DETERRENCE NOT
ATTACK. RANSOM UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY BUILDUP, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE178003
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: P:TMILLER
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780288-0955
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780758/aaaabxbp.tel
Line Count: 234
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4ee50773-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2002016
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FIRST IDEAS OF YEAR PRESIDENT-TO-BE CONCERNING ARMS PROGRAMS IN YEMEN SUMMARY: PRESIDENT-TO-BE ALI ABDALLAH SALIH OUTLIN
TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, US
To: ISLAMABAD
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4ee50773-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014